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Study: With Goats, Chickens, Program Helps Poorest Get By

NEW YORK — May 14, 2015, 2:10 PM ET
By MALCOLM RITTER AP Science Writer

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FILE - In this Monday, April 20, 2015 file photo, a man stands at the entrance of a house in a shanty area in New Delhi, India. A study released on Thursday, May 14, 2015 concludes the very poorest of the poor can be helped with a program that... [View Full Caption](#)
The Associated Press



The very poorest of the poor can be helped with a program that includes providing goats, sheep, chickens or other livestock and training in how to make money from them, a large six-nation study concludes.

That approach didn't wipe out poverty for participants, but they became "significantly less poor," said economist Dean Karlan of Yale University and the nonprofit Innovations for Poverty Action.

"There's no panacea," Karlan said, but the approach is "better than anything else I'm aware of."

Karlan and colleagues conducted an independent evaluation of the anti-poverty strategy, which is widely used in **Bangladesh**, to see if it would work in a variety of settings. Their review included more than 10,000 households in **Ethiopia**, Ghana, **Honduras**, India, Pakistan and Peru. Results were published Thursday by the journal Science.

The assessment focused on the poorest within villages. About half the households had incomes that translate to earning less than \$1.25 per person a day in the United States.

Key components of the programs include providing assets like livestock and training in how to manage them, a regular stipend to provide basic support, and encouragement to save money.

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To evaluate the program, the study randomly assigned eligible households to either participate or not, and then compared the outcomes for the two groups over three years.

Most of the program's activity was in the first few months. At the two-year mark, when the program ended, the participating group was doing better across a wide range of measures. The gains were largely maintained a year after that.

The study checked on things like household spending, value of assets, how often participants went to bed hungry, amount of time spent working, income, and physical health.

The program's benefits exceeded its cost in all countries except Honduras, where a large fraction of the chickens died from disease.

Christopher Blattman of Columbia University, who studies poverty but didn't participate in the new research, praised Karlan's evaluation and said the anti-poverty strategy is "a great program."

Stephen Smith of George Washington University, an adviser to the American affiliate of BRAC, an organization that uses the strategy in Bangladesh, said the results show that "graduation" from ultra-poverty is possible through self-employment or eventually jobs.

He said the finding of increased spending on food is particularly encouraging, because that is key to improving well-being and to escaping poverty traps.

Online:

Science: <http://www.sciencemag.org>

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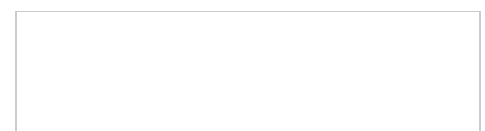
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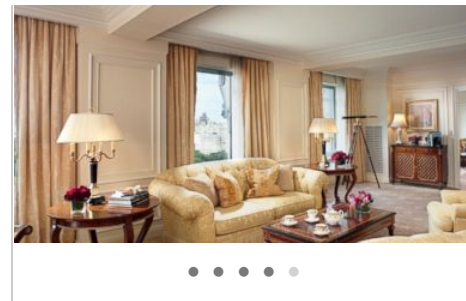
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I once thought that way, then I went to Haiti and realized how amazing and hard working the people really are. Life changing experience for sure, everyone should see a third world country for themselves and meet these good folks.
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TexasVulcan → **nathan mckenzie** · 7 hours ago
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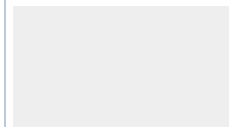
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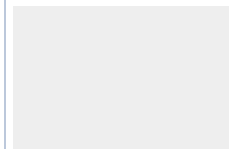
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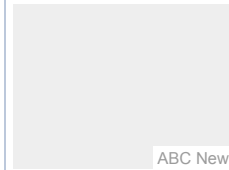
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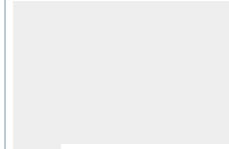
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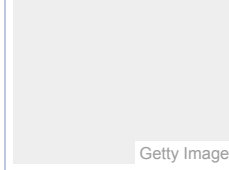
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